

Beginner's Guide to Undergraduate Study in the USA:

**APPLYING TO
AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES
FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDY**

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With this Package, you should also receive the following materials:

1. Peterson's "Applying to Colleges and Universities in the United States";
2. A map of the United States;
3. "If You Want to Study in the United States" Undergraduate Booklet.
4. The Brochure on Advising Services at the EAS.

ABOUT AMERICAN DEGREES

American undergraduate degrees are based on a **Liberal Arts** philosophy that requires students to take a wide variety of courses in the arts and sciences before concentrating in one academic area, creating a "well rounded education."

The Associate degree: normally lasts two years and is designed to meet the requirements of the first two years of a bachelor degree. Please read the Chapter on Two-Year Colleges for further information on this type of degree.

The Bachelor degree: consists of

- 1) general education courses in a wide range of subjects;
- 2) a major, which is a concentrated field of study; and
- 3) electives which are a student's free choice.

Although Bachelor degrees are designed to be completed in four years, there is no fixed completion time scale. Instead, a degree is awarded after a student has completed a required amount of coursework expressed in terms known as credits/units or semester hours. Usually a student will need to accumulate approximately 130 - 180 credits in order to graduate, with each course on average earning 3-4 credits. Continuous assessment is a prominent feature and each course (class) is graded and the grade is then converted into a numeric equivalent on a scale of 0-4.0. These scores are averaged to create a student's **Grade Point Average (GPA)**, which is used as an indicator of performance. Colleges and universities both award undergraduate degrees, and colleges are in no way inferior to universities. We will use the terms "colleges" and "universities" interchangeably in this guide.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS YOU WILL NEED:

South African-educated students are expected to hold at least a senior certificate with exemption with at least a grade D or higher to apply to a 4 year college or university. Two-year colleges may only require a senior certificate.

WHEN TO APPLY:

Ideally you should begin the process 12-18 months in advance. (See the Time Schedule for Applying to American Universities.) Application forms for the Fall term (beginning August or September) are available in August of the previous year. Each university has its own deadline, which may be as early as November. Allow six months for processing the application. Some universities will accept students for January admission.

Remember, the later you apply, the narrower your choice will be.

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 1 - CHOOSE YOUR COLLEGES

American students consider the whole institution rather than a single department due to the broad approach of the undergraduate degree. Read Choosing a US University for a list of criteria that will help you narrow your choice. Please note that **MEDICINE** and **LAW** are not subjects studied at the undergraduate level in the United States. The field of Medicine is basically closed to foreign students.

Our reference library has course directories that list universities by subject and provide full contact details. We have computer software packages that can quickly provide a university list that is tailored to your needs, and lets you browse through prospectuses and gain access to university Web sites.

To ensure acceptance at at least one of your choices, you should apply to at least one school from each level of difficulty. For example, if you intend applying to Harvard, which is the most difficult school to be accepted into, you should also apply to other schools with varying levels of acceptance difficulty.

STEP 2 - OBTAIN APPLICATION FORMS

Write, phone, or preferably email the Director of Undergraduate Admissions at each of the colleges you are interested in for an application form and a catalog (prospectus). Your request should include the following information: name, age, address, nationality, educational qualifications (or predicted qualifications), proposed major (if undecided that is OK), ideal start date, and finally, how you plan to finance your education.

Some American universities now have application forms on-line, which can save you expensive international postal costs and lengthy waiting periods. Remember this option may require a valid credit card to pay any university application fees.

STEP 3 - REGISTER TO TAKE THE SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)

This is a 3-hour primarily multiple-choice, aptitude test. Most institutions will require the in addition to your school qualifications. Some institutions may also require 3 SAT II Tests which measure the candidate's knowledge in a specific subject.

Registration bulletins and free sample questions for the SAT I or II can be obtained from EAS (the Educational Advisory Service) in person. We also sell test preparation books. You can use our computers to register for the SAT on-line and also to take mock SAT exams.

If English is NOT your native language you will need to register for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). The test is given many times every month, and all TOEFL tests in the South Africa are computer based, as paper based tests have been phased out. Registration forms can be obtained from EAS in person.

STEP 4 - RETURN THE APPLICATION FORMS

The US does not have a centralized application system so you must return your completed application forms directly to each individual college. There is no limit to the number of colleges you can apply to; however, most students apply to between 3 and 8 colleges to keep costs down. Read everything thoroughly. Incomplete information will only cause delays. Deadlines are usually firm. Some of the documents often required as part of your application are:

- School transcripts—Certified True copies of your reports from Grade 9 through 12 (Standards 7 through 10); otherwise a document created by schools detailing subjects taken and grades received (check with university);
- Funding certification—form usually provided by university, must be signed by bank or accompanied by bank statements as the university directs;
- SAT and TOEFL (if applicable) scores sent directly from test administrators to the university;
- Letters of recommendation (if required);
- Essay or personal statement (if required).

You should be aware of the costs involved in the application process:

- Costs of catalogues: \$5-15 approx.
- Non-refundable application fee paid to university: \$30-\$100 (bank draft in US\$ or by credit card)
- Test application fees: SAT I - \$38, SAT II - \$35-\$48, TOEFL - \$100

(add \$5 for SAT I and II for fax registration)

Colleges usually notify their applicants of acceptance or rejection between April and June. Note the deadlines by which you have to reply if you are accepted. If you are accepted by more than one institution, write to the one you decide to accept (pay a deposit if required) and also write to those whose offers you wish to decline.

COSTS & FINANCIAL AID

COSTS: The cost of a US education is a major consideration for the majority of students. It may be particularly so for international students who have the additional responsibility of proving their ability to meet all costs before they will be granted their student visa.

Each individual college sets its own fees; consequently they vary widely (see [Appendix 1](#)). Generally, tuition for state universities ranges from \$3,000-\$14,000. Private universities generally charge between \$8,000-\$25,000 (as of 1998-99). In addition to tuition and fees, usually, students are expected to purchase all of their books as well as any additional supplies required by their major and this can add up to a significant amount.

Living expenses vary and are usually highest in big cities. They range from \$4,000 to \$14,000 per academic year (9 months) which is in ADDITION to tuition costs. Other costs you will need to consider include transportation between the US and your home country, health insurance (required) and personal expenses.

FINANCIAL AID: In the United States, most students expect to get assistance from their families to cover the high cost of education. Universities extend this expectation to international students as well, therefore you cannot expect to receive an entirely free education. Funding from Local Education Authorities will generally not be available to you when you plan to study outside South Africa.

However, some US universities do offer some form of financial aid to international students. After family resources, US universities are usually the primary source of funding for many international undergraduate students (see [Appendix 2](#)). Private universities are more likely to provide financial aid to international students than state universities. Examine the institution's total costs and if your family can afford 50% and the institution offers financial aid then it is worthwhile applying. Full scholarships that cover total expenses are rare.

Most university financial aid is based on academic merit, although a few will give funding based on need. Other forms of university funding include athletic scholarships, performing arts scholarships or scholarships based on minority or miscellaneous criteria. Make certain to enquire whether universities offer financial aid to international students and for what criteria.

Non-university funding is less common but still available from independent funding bodies, corporations or private individuals. Finding independent funding sources usually requires time and dedication to sift through the listings available in directories and on the Internet. Eligibility for most independent scholarships is limited by very specific criteria, so be certain you meet the eligibility requirements.

Some other sources of financial aid to consider are loans or possible employment with your university. Loans may be available directly from some universities or through certain US lenders providing students find a US citizen who is prepared to co-sign. The provisions of the F-1 student visa allow you to work on-campus for up to 20 hours per week. However, while an on-campus job is a good way of providing pocket money for

living expenses, it cannot be used as a source of income for any official financial statements for a visa application.

Talented athletes should request our package of information on “*Athletic Scholarships*”. For further possibilities on all types of financial aid, consult *The International Student Handbook (university funding)* and *Funding for US Study* and *The Scholarship Handbook (university & independent funding)* in our Reference Library.

VISAS

Most international students will enter the US on a non-immigrant student visa. To qualify for a visa, you must have proof of university acceptance for full-time study. Once you accept the university offer and show proof of sufficient funding, the university will send you either an I-20 or an IAP-66 government document, which proves university acceptance. You can then apply for your visa - either an F-1 or a J-1, respectively. South African citizens may be required to return to their home country in order to apply for a visa to the US if applying outside of South Africa.

You should phone the United States Consulate nearest you to confirm visa days, hours and current costs.

10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa

1) **TIES TO HOME COUNTRY.** Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States.

"Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.

2) **ENGLISH.** Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview. If you are coming to the United States solely to study intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.

3) **SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.** Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor applying for a high school program and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example, about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.

4) **KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS.** If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career when you return home.

5) **BE CONCISE.** Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

6) **SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION.** It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.

7) **NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL.** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States.

8) **EMPLOYMENT.** Your main purpose of coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the United States. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the United States. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.

9) **DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME.** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

10) **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

This document was produced by NAFSA: Association of International Educators. NAFSA would like to credit Gerald A. Wunsch, Esq., 1997, then a member of the Consular Issues Working Group, and a former U.S. Consular Officer in Mexico, Suriname, and the Netherlands and Martha Wailes of Indiana University for their contributions to this document. NAFSA also appreciates the input of the U.S. Department of State.

CHOOSING A US UNIVERSITY

Choosing a university from thousands of miles away presents serious difficulties. Most American students would visit campuses for guided tours, meet admissions officers or even spend the night on campus with enrolled students. The international student must use directories, college search computer software, university catalogues and videotapes, attend international college fairs and correspond directly with professors and admissions personnel to get his/her questions answered. Once you start the process of researching possible undergraduate programs, you will be overwhelmed with choice as there are over 3,600 US universities. You and your family need to narrow that choice by compiling a list of factors important to you. The following information is meant to provide you with criteria you might want to consider. Not all factors are equally important to all students, so work out your own priorities.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Area of Concentration: It is not essential to declare the area of concentration you plan to undertake when you enter a university. If you have a definite degree objective, however, identify universities offering that field. A great many subjects are taught in every university, so choice of fields does not necessarily eliminate many institutions! In some fields, however, you may want to check out possible specialization (for example, many universities offer education but only a few offer physical education or special education).

Academic Emphasis: Get an idea of how the university emphasizes its curriculum. Is it pre-professional or liberal arts? Do the undergraduates dominate the campus or do the postgraduates? Many liberal arts colleges emphasize teaching and professor/student interaction, so the teacher to student ratio is quite low. Some research centered campuses are postgraduate dominated and undergraduates are secondary; however, facilities are often state of the art and professors are world-renowned.

Courses: Study the course catalogue and course descriptions. Many international students choose the US system because of the flexibility it offers through the liberal arts framework. Some degrees, however, are highly structured and universities dictate exact coursework. Prescribed coursework does not allow for student athletes who want to take a lighter load "in season" or double major options for the motivated student.

Rate of Return: The rate of return of students who continue after their first year gives an indication of the program difficulty level and student satisfaction level, so try to get more information on this.

Accreditation: Check that any university you are considering is regionally accredited. You can obtain more information on accreditation and the accreditation process from the Educational Advisory Service.

COST

Study the fee structure printed in most university prospectuses carefully and incorporate into your calculations the cost of room, food, tuition, fees, travel and other expenses for the full four years.

Private vs. State-Supported: US universities are either private or state-supported. In general the tuition fees at state-supported universities are less expensive than private universities. International students, however, are considered non-state residents and are charged "out-of-state" tuition rates, which are higher than in-state rates. Some state universities are limited in the percentage of out-of-state students they can enroll. Neither cost nor type of university is necessarily an indicator of the quality of the university, however.

Tuition: Note the cost of tuition and fees and be aware that tuition costs may rise each year.

Housing: Try to find out if housing is available for all four years of enrolment. If students are asked to find off-campus housing for one or two years, find out the cost of off-campus housing.

Meal Plan: Some universities mandate that first year students must purchase the meal plan, while other universities offer options within the meal plan including the number of meals per week or the meal halls used etc.

Financial Aid: Some US universities offer financial aid for international students (See [Appendix 2](#) for a sampling of universities). Check the amount of the average award, the percentage of financial aid awarded and the nature of the awards, whether they are need-based or academically based. It is possible that a university will allow an international student to be on a payment plan so that they can pay the tuition in installments.

ADMISSION DIFFICULTY

Because the US university system is so extensive, admission requirements vary greatly. This means that private universities and liberal arts colleges at the top of the selectivity indices receive enormous numbers of applications and accept only a small percentage, while other colleges can accept all applicants who meet their admission standards. Most directories will give information such as the average SAT score for the previous year's accepted students. In addition, directories and many college prospectuses will list the percentage of students accepted the previous year. Selectivity assessments using this type of data, however, tend to put weight on test admission scores that are only one part of an application and not necessarily the most important part.

SIZE AND LOCATION

Size: Many international students do not realize that US universities' enrolment size can range from 200-50,000. Some universities resemble small cities with their own post offices, grocery stores and shopping centers. Size ranges offer different opportunities and academic climates for the undergraduate. Some large campuses are located in very small rural towns where the students and the universities dominate the local economy. Other schools may be in large, densely populated urban areas with a very small enrolment.

Location: The climate in the US varies considerably from one region to another. Every region offers both urban and rural settings. Some areas present more security concerns than others. The undergraduate student candidate should be informed about security risks and precautions. Some international students have relatives living in the US and this may be a major influence on the choice of universities.

INSTITUTION PERSONALITY

Social Life: Some US universities have reputations as either social schools or very quiet academic schools. In addition, some schools may be known as "commuter schools," meaning that most students live off-campus and commute into classes, which affects the campus atmosphere. Potential undergraduates will want to know what the atmosphere is like at weekends on campus; if most students have cars, they might leave to go on road trips or back home to visit family every weekend and vacate the campus.

International Students: Some US universities enroll a substantial number of international students while others may only enroll one or two students. You may either be considered a very special person to get to know or you may have a built-in support group who can share your experiences.

Personality: All US universities will accept students of any race, color or creed. Many universities or colleges, however, were founded with a certain mission, whether to provide a religious atmosphere on campus, a single sex educational experience or a majority ethnic student population. Read university missions printed in college prospectuses carefully and decide if your goals match the goals of the campus. As well, all US universities will accept students of any age and the application process is usually the same for all students, regardless of age. However, some universities have services available for adult students or have larger populations of adult students, which may make the transition to student life easier.

Extracurricular Activities: US universities offer many opportunities for students to develop skills through extracurricular activities such as sports teams, academic clubs, university newspapers, drama productions and other rewarding programs.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Student Services: US universities cater to the needs of the student through services such as international student advisers, counseling services, legal aid services, housing offices, varied meal plans, health centers, tutoring facilities, and many other helpful services.

Academic Distinctions: Many US universities award academic distinctions to outstanding graduating seniors which often provide an incentive for students.

Internship or Overseas Study Programs: Many US universities have incorporated into their curriculum internship or overseas study programs.

Graduates: The job-placement success of a university's graduating seniors is one indication of the emphasis of the curriculum. Universities will tell prospective students the number of their graduates finding professional positions and the number accepted to postgraduate programmes.

Students with Disabilities: If you have special needs then you need to make sure that the college can accommodate you. Advise the admissions office of your disability early in the process and obtain information about facilities offered from the college's Office of Disabled Student Services. Find out what services are provided automatically and whether any extra costs will be incurred.

The Educational Advisory Service offers educational advisers, a library and a resource center to assist you in gathering the information you may need.

Grading on the Curve: College Ratings and Rankings

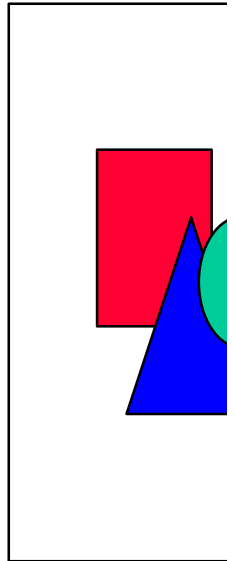
by Glenn Kersten, January 2000

When it comes to colleges, nearly everyone has an opinion. Some base their opinion on the reputation of the school; some on personal experience; and others on current sports scores. As librarians, we like to think that we have more objective sources for evaluating colleges and universities.

It ain't necessarily so.

There is much research on the validity of numerical scores used to rank academic institutions. These studies reveal a number of problems:

- It is virtually impossible to quantify the *quality* of education.
- What is important to one college applicant may be meaningless to another.
- The existence of a ranking system encourages colleges to boost their scores by providing misleading, exaggerated, or downright incorrect information to the ratings services. (Almost all of the “hard” data used by college guides and rating sources is provided by the schools themselves, without independent confirmation.)
- It is not meaningful to evaluate entire institutions with a single numerical score. Even university *departments* vary from year to year with respect to faculty and funding, let alone the college as a whole.
- Ranking services often change their methodology, so that a college ranked number one last year could dive to tenth place this year, and vice versa. Cynics have noted that jumbling the rankings this way leads to increased sales of the ratings publication, compared to a listing that remains relatively static from year to year.
- Differences between the ranked positions may be statistically insignificant, but forcing them to be placed in an arbitrary scale exaggerates these differences. In other words, there may be little difference in quality between the schools ranked #2 and #20, but the uninformed consumer naturally thinks otherwise.
- Lists of “best” schools are worthless unless the judging criteria are specific, non-arbitrary, and clearly spelled out for the reader—and the



- data to be judged must be accurate and independently verified.

These criticisms indicate that there are serious problems with the current ratings methodology. But beyond that, what is the attitude of the general public toward ranking services?

True or False?

1. High school seniors rely heavily on college rating guides when selecting a school to attend.

False. The sources of information most frequently consulted (in rank order) include: parents, friends and classmates, students attending or soon to be attending colleges of interest, college brochures, and materials in high school guidance and career centers. Only those students from upper middle and upper class families tend to use these guides, and, even then, they place more emphasis on "human" sources of information. A 1997 survey of college freshmen released by the Higher Education Research Institute reported that, of the 251,232 freshmen surveyed, only 8.6 percent considered colleges' rankings in national magazines to be "very important" when selecting a college.

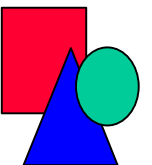
2. University administrators and admissions officers are relatively unconcerned about their school's standings in the ratings.

True. Although a few institutions are concerned enough about rankings to supply inaccurate information to guidebook and ratings publishers to boost their status, the evidence from various studies indicates that most are not particularly influenced by the school's rankings. (That situation may change if state legislators begin to tie school funding to ranking status, however. The January 1997 issue of *State Policy Reports*, a bulletin for state higher education policy makers, points out a correlation between school quality ratings and the return on investment that states receive for their support of public higher education. This newsletter even provides its own rankings for states with high and low rates of return.)

Red Herring Time?

You may well ask, if college ratings are mostly irrelevant, sometimes inaccurate, and have so little effect on the decision-making process for high school seniors, then why bother reviewing them? There are several reasons. For one thing, these services are *perceived* as important by the general public. This is clear from the huge sales of college ratings publications.

Another reason is the recent proliferation of sources. Not long ago, libraries had only a handful of ratings guides for comparison, including the *Gourman Report* and *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*. Lately, however, some national magazines have discovered that there is profit to be made in the college-bound market; among them, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Money Magazine*, *Time*,



Most importantly, many ratings do have merit, as long as prospective students are cautious about interpreting them.

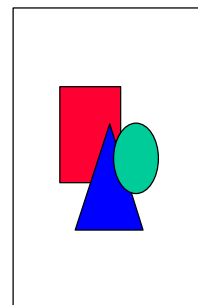
In the end, college-bound students are looking for a quick, easy way to compare the thousands of schools available to them. Ratings services, though less influential than personal advice and campus visits, do provide a way to winnow the choices to a manageable number.

Print Sources

Education Rankings Annual. This Gale publication is a compilation of ratings from many different sources, including scholarly journals, college guides, government publications, newspapers, and popular magazines. The wide range of sources helps to insure that selective bias is avoided; in fact the editors have purposely excluded sources that have been widely criticized by academicians. Both current and "classic" studies are included, to give perspective. The introduction states that "there is no individual ranking in any area of education that should be considered THE definitive ranking. Rankings change and vary over time . . . [and] all rankings in the educational arena should be examined and compared with other available studies; they should not be judged in a vacuum." Some of the specific ratings include academic reputation, citation analysis, peer evaluations, distinguished alumni, student achievement in later life, admissions selectivity, application rates, test scores, tuition, faculty salaries, and library and computer facilities. The index conveniently lists, for each institution, all ratings which included the school. The focus is on U.S. universities, but it is unclear how many are involved overall. This source is expensive, but recommended.

The Gourman Report. This reference source, published annually since 1967, has received more criticism than perhaps any other source. The author steadfastly refuses to explain in detail how the ratings are determined, other than that colleges are rated in 10 different categories. None of the information is provided (directly, at least) by the colleges themselves, and no students or staff are interviewed, so the sources of information largely remain a mystery. Now the *Gourman Report* is being published by the prestigious Princeton Review, and according to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ("A Self-Published College Guide Goes Big-Time, and Educators Cry Foul," November 7, 1997, pp. A45-A46), critics are concerned that it will gain legitimacy. *GR* ranks more than 1,200 undergraduate colleges, and approximately 140 major disciplines; another edition similarly rates graduate and professional programs.

Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges. Frederick Rugg rates roughly 800 "quality four-year colleges" that offer bachelor's degrees, based largely on student input. Data from high school counselors and college admissions officers is also used. The ratings are provided for 80 majors; and for each major, the ratings are further broken down into "most selective, very selective, and selective." Ratings are simplistic and one-dimensional, but this guide is useful for those who prefer the opinions of students over those from "The



America's Best Colleges. Published by the editors of *U.S. News & World Report*, this was the first general periodical to offer a special annual edition devoted to ratings (followed by *Money Magazine*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and even *Mother Jones*). The popularity of that issue surprised everyone. It is now the best-selling issue for the entire year, and it has been expanded to include an *America's Best Graduate Schools* edition. Rankings take into account geographic region, public versus private schools, liberal arts strength, and "specialty schools," as well as the traditional rating by major. This publisher has received almost as much criticism as the *Gourman Report* in recent years, partly because the rating methodology changes so frequently. The [publisher](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm) also has a strong Web presence (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm>).

Online Sources

[College and University Rankings](http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankings.htm). An excellent, comprehensive overview of college rating sources; particularly those available on the Internet. Includes a bibliography of cautionary notes about the precarious nature of rankings. Highly recommended.

<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankings.htm>

["Rankings and Ratings,"](http://cbweb1.collegeboard.org/aes/emr/emrsu97/html/rank.html) *Enrollment Management Review*, volume 13, issue 4 (Summer 1997). From College Board Online, a clear, readable summary of research on the influence of ratings on high school students and on colleges themselves.

<http://cbweb1.collegeboard.org/aes/emr/emrsu97/html/rank.html>

For Further Information

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The Gourman Report: A Rating of Graduate and Professional Programs in American and International Universities, by Jack Gourman. 8th edition, 1997. Princeton Review Publishing.

"The Quest for Quality in Higher Education," by Hal Hovey. *State Policy Reports*, v. 15, n. 2, Jan. 1997, pp. 2-24.

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Glenn Kersten is a Research Librarian at the Suburban Library System Reference Service.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Two-year colleges in the United States offer an alternative to the more traditional four-year bachelor's degree programmes, providing access to high quality post-secondary studies to many who might otherwise not continue their education. **It should be noted, however, that completing one's study at a two-year college IS NOT equivalent to obtaining a four-year bachelor's degree.**

Known as community, technical or junior colleges, these institutions offer study in a wide range of subjects to post-secondary students of all ages and academic intention, from those who simply wish to take a short course to those wishing to eventually pursue a bachelor's degree and beyond. In addition to educational flexibility, two-year colleges are also known for their affordability. Tuition costs are low for those living within the area "covered" by the college, as much of the funding for these colleges comes from the communities surrounding them, hence the term "community" college. Though costs are slightly higher for those coming from outside these districts, they are still relatively low in comparison to four-year colleges. Many students will also save money on living costs by living at home or with a relative.

Courses of Study

These institutions are often referred to as two-year colleges as this is the normal amount of time needed to complete the degree awarded at this level, known as an associate's degree. The **Associate of Arts (A.A.)** and the **Associate of Science (A.S.)** degrees are offered in a wide variety of liberal arts and science subjects designed to meet the requirements of the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. Degree requirements are established to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to either continue toward a bachelor's degree, transferring for their final two years to an accredited four-year college or university, or to competitively enter the workforce.

Community colleges also offer occupational-technical programs designed to prepare students directly for employment or to assist those already employed to update their skills. The **Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)** degree is offered in vocational and technical areas such as business, industry and computer programming. Certificates of completion are also awarded in specific programs that require varying amounts of study.

In addition to academic and vocational degree programs, most two-year colleges offer programs to help students improve their basic academic skills and prepare them for lifelong learning. Adult education courses are offered to address the individual's and community's social, intellectual and recreational interests.

Admission Requirements and Procedures

Generally speaking, for admission to a two-year college one should have completed schooling up to Standard 10 (Grade 12) and achieved a senior certificate For students

who intend to transfer to a four-year college upon completion of an associate's degree, usually a minimum of a senior certificate with exemption will be required. Many colleges will also require that the student take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and, for non-native English speakers, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Admission requirements and procedures will be similar to those for four-year colleges, as described in the Beginner's Guide to Undergraduate Study in the US distributed by EAS. There are, however, major differences between community college and university admission. One is the application deadline. Community college deadlines for fall entry can be anywhere between March and the day before classes start in August. Another difference is the open enrolment policy that most community colleges use. Open enrolment means that every applicant will be accepted into the institution. If an applicant has a minimal academic record, the community college might require you to take coursework designed to prepare you for more advanced coursework. Four-year universities may offer you pending admission and ask you to complete a semester or more of introductory coursework at a community college in order to fulfil admission requirements into the four-year institution. After completion of the required coursework, providing that you have done well at the community college, you will be admitted into a regular degree programme at the four-year university.

Admission requirements for non-degree courses may vary widely, so it is necessary to check with the individual college directly or to find their information in the reference library of EAS.

Transferring

Many students with an associate degree from a regionally accredited two-year college will transfer to an accredited four-year bachelor's programme in the third or "junior" year. This process is made possible through articulation agreements between two-year and four-year colleges, which guarantees that courses taken at an accredited two-year college will transfer into a four-year college. Articulation agreements are more likely to occur between institutions within a state system (i.e. a community college in Ohio and a four-year in New York are less likely to have a reciprocal agreement than two institutions in the same state). You can find out about any articulation agreements that exist by writing to the two-year or four-year colleges that you are interested in attending. You can also check the resources in the EAS reference library.

International students wishing to attend a two-year college with the intention of transferring to a four-year bachelor's degree program should be very careful about planning their entire undergraduate program in advance. Some four-year colleges have strict guidelines for transferring which will require some degree of forward planning. One should consider such factors as whether or not the two-year college has an articulation agreement with four-year colleges; what requirements will the four-year institution have for accepting transfer credits; and what level of grades will be required for transferring.

Housing

The majority of students attending two-year colleges live in the local community and commute to classes from home. Although some institutions guarantee on-campus accommodation for foreign students, the great majority of colleges do not provide

student housing, though there may be a housing office or a foreign student adviser to assist you in finding local accommodation.

Costs and Financial Aid

There is no financial aid for foreign students to attend two-year colleges as they are state and locally supported, though some colleges will offer a number of athletic scholarships for talented athletes. Please refer to our “*Athletic Scholarships*” guide for more information. Costs are relatively low in comparison with four-year colleges. Tuition and fees will vary, but are normally under \$4000 per academic year.

For more information on two-year colleges consult *Peterson’s Guide to Two-Year Colleges* (Peterson’s, annual) or *Peterson’s Guide to Vocational and Technical Schools - East & West* (Peterson’s, annual) both of which are available in the EAS reference library.

The Internet has a wealth of information on two-year colleges. The following web sites may be useful in your search:

Peterson's: <http://www.petersons.com>

The American Association of Community Colleges: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

TIME SCHEDULE FOR APPLYING TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

This is the recommended timeframe for applying to universities but it is often the case that students complete the process in a much shorter time period.

18 months prior to enrolment - consider, research, and prepare the following:

- What are your reasons for wanting to study in the USA?
- Think about the type of college or university you would like to attend and begin researching suitable institutions.
- How much money can your family provide each year for your education? Will you need financial aid?
- Find out application/financial aid deadlines. This will affect when you will need to take the standardized tests required for admission. The tests should be taken in advance of submitting university applications.
- Find out which tests are required by your prospective universities and register to sit the test.

TEST	DATE (exact dates are on the back of the current bulletin)	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
<u>SAT I & SAT II</u> You cannot sit the SAT I and SAT II on the same day.	October November December January May June	September October October December March April

All of the available SAT II subject tests are not given on all dates, so check the latest bulletin.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is held many times every month. (Contact Sylvan Prometric at 011 713 0600 for more information)

18 month countdown to enrolment - complete the following (months indicated are estimates)

November

- In the months before you begin your 12th grade year register for the SAT exams you will need to take.

December

- Take the SAT I and register for the SAT II in January.

April

- Register to take the SAT's again if necessary in May and June. Avoid taking the SAT's in November during trials, or during exam terms.

August

- Write to universities for application and financial aid forms/catalogues.
- Obtain test registration forms to sit the SAT I and, if necessary, the SAT II. Begin preparing for the tests.

September

- Request an official transcript from your school for each university to which you wish to apply.
- Request letters of recommendation from your teachers.
- Prepare application essays.
- Double check that transcripts/references have been sent to your chosen universities.
- Sit the appropriate admissions test(s).

November - April

- Submit completed applications in time for university deadlines.

April - June

- Letters of acceptance or rejection will arrive. Decide which university to attend, notify them of your decision, complete and return any forms they require.
- Send letters of regret to those universities you reject.
- Organize finances (arrange to transfer funds to a US bank, make sure you have funds for travel and expenses on arrival).
- Finalize arrangements for housing and medical insurance with your university.

July

- Apply to US Embassy for visa on receipt of the I-20 from the US university you will attend.

- Make travel arrangements.
- Contact the International Student Office at your university with details of your arrival plans.
- Obtain the EAS guide to living and studying in the US, and pre-departure information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

What are the SAT I, the SAT II and the ACT? Will I have to take these tests? How do I register?

What is the TOEFL? If English is not my first language, but I have studied in Britain, will I have to take it? How do I register?

What is a transcript and how do I get one?

Do I need to hold A Levels or Higher Grades to get into US universities?

Will the American system recognize my Independent Board Exam or Scottish Qualifications Agency Higher National Diploma?

How do I find out which college offers the subject I want to study?

In South Africa I'm considered a "mature student." Can I still apply to US universities?

Which are the top American colleges? Where can I get a list?

**What are the SAT I, the SAT II and the ACT? Will I have to take these tests?
How do I register?**

The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) I, SAT II and the American College Test (ACT) are standardized assessment tests which form a part of the admissions process in most American universities. **ONLY** the SAT I and the SAT II are offered in South Africa. The SAT I is a general aptitude test which covers maths and verbal skills, and SAT IIs are specialized subject tests. Each university to which you apply will have its own policy with respect to these tests, so you will need to check each catalogue or consult a college guide for current requirements. The tests are held in various regions of South Africa 6 times a year. However, as these are US tests for admission into US universities the administration is done by organizations in the US. Test registration and preparation materials are available from EAS but please note that you cannot register through our office. On-line registration for the SAT is also available with a valid credit card (<http://www.collegeboard.org>). Internet access and computerized test preparation software are available at EAS's Technology Center.

What is the TOEFL? If English is not my first language, but I have studied in Britain, will I have to take it? How do I register?

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a standardized test designed to evaluate the language proficiency of a non-native English speaker. Generally, it is required of applicants whose country of origin is not English speaking. If this applies to you, but you have studied in an English-speaking country, you will need to allow time in the application process to correspond with admissions officers about the TOEFL. They may waive the requirement if you do well enough in your high school English and on the SAT exams. The test is held in South Africa and you can obtain test registration and preparation materials from EAS but please note that you will need to

register via Sylvan Prometric (011 713 0600).

What is a transcript and how do I get one?

In American terminology, a transcript is a record card that follows a student throughout his/her education at each institution. It usually contains a listing of the classes he/she has taken and the grade or mark achieved in the class. These grades are averaged numerically to compute the student's GPA or Grade Point Average. While the senior certificates alone may be sufficient for some universities, others may ask for additional information such as the syllabi for your exams, which you will have to obtain from your school or college.

Do I need to hold a senior certificate with exemption to get into US universities?

Most US universities will expect you to hold the senior certificate with exemption, just as South African universities require them.

Will the American system recognize my Independent Board Exam or Scottish Qualifications Agency Higher National Diploma?

There is no official method of equating the US and South African education systems. However, Independent Board Exams are generally recognized as being of a more difficult standard. The Scottish Higher's are considered professional qualifications rather than academic qualifications.

How do I find out which college offers the subject I want to study?

The EAS reference library contains comprehensive directories such as Peterson's *Four-Year Colleges* or Barron's *Profiles of American Colleges*, which have universities, listed by subjects (majors). Peterson's *Applying to Colleges and Universities in the United States* also provides lists of universities by broad subject area, this book should have been included with this package. Software such as *Career and College Quest* can also help you draw up a list of universities according to subject area. However, you should note that at the undergraduate level, you are enrolling in a liberal arts degree program, which is more wide-ranging than the more focused South Africa degree programs. While you want to choose a college that has strengths in your preferred subject, keep in mind that you will not pursue that subject to the exclusion of all others. An American degree concentrates in one academic area, yet draws from several other areas in order to provide a broad base of knowledge for the graduate. While you will spend much of your time in the last two years concentrating on your major field of study, during your first two years, you will also be required to take classes in a range of fields outside your major. Known as general education requirements these classes will cover maths, sciences, humanities, social sciences, languages and possibly physical education!

Common subjects like engineering, English, history or biology are offered by most universities in the US, which could leave you with a list of over 1,000 institutions from which to choose. When choosing a college look at the total picture of the university's undergraduate program: academic, geographic, social and financial and determine the criteria most important to you. Read the section Choosing a US University in this guide for suggested criteria. You will also want to talk to people who have been educated in America for a personal view of study in the US.

In South Africa I'm considered a "mature student." Can I still apply to US universities?

Yes. There is no age limit on applying to US universities and many universities have a sizeable proportion of students who are starting as "non-traditional" age students i.e. older than 17/18 years of age. The admissions office should treat you the same as any other applicant and there is no official designation of mature students. However, you may want to consider factors such as the size of the "non-traditional" student population, as well as housing and special services for older students to be sure that you are comfortable in the university environment. If you have dependents, you will need to factor their needs into the costs of attending the university. University international offices can usually provide information on childcare and schools in the local area.

Which are the top American colleges? Where can I get a list?

There is no "official" ranking of American institutions. There is no direct US Government control over the 3,000-plus universities and colleges, and no "official" body to make such a ranking. Unofficial rankings do exist and can often be found in the popular press but they generally do not rank all the institutions in the US. The EAS does not compile ranked lists of colleges but our reference library contains some of these unofficial rankings which you are welcome to consult in-person. Some are available on the Internet. In the past rankings have been found to be unreliable so the wise student does not use them as a shortcut to doing thorough research into which college is right for him/her. If you do decide to apply to one of the "top colleges" make sure you also apply to less challenging schools as well to ensure yourself a place at an American university. If you are an average or below average student, it is unlikely that you will be accepted at the more competitive institutions.

Resources on Undergraduate Study at the Educational Advisory Service United States Consulate, Durban

The Educational Advisory Service (EAS) of the United States Consulate, Durban is funded by the US Government to provide information and advice on US education. The EAS houses a resource center including a reference library and Advising Technology Center which offers computer search packages, Internet access and test preparation software. Resources for finding athletic scholarships include several directories concerning colleges that offer athletics and/or scholarships, international academic standards for athletics ability, recruitment guidelines, data on team records, coaches and college facilities, test preparation guides for reference use or for sale, and application forms for the SAT and TOEFL.

Students and parents are welcome to use these resources Monday through Wednesday from 8:00 am to 4:00pm. Should you wish to speak to an Educational Adviser in person, telephone hours are Mondays through Wednesdays *only* from 8 to 4pm. The phone number is (031) 3044737 extension 116.

EAS hosts group information sessions each Monday at 12 noon and again on Tuesdays at 8am. It is essential to attend one of these programs if you are interested in attending an American institution.

Useful Resources in our Library:

SAT and TOEFL study Guides

Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges and Universities

Peterson's Guide to 2 Year Colleges in the United States

Career and College Quest: A database of 4-year colleges and universities in the United States.

Plus the library contains over 350 videos of U.S. colleges and universities as well as many more printed and computer based information resources on study in the United States.

APPENDIX I:

UNDERGRADUATE FEES AT US COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

The following tables offer a selection of college and university tuition fees and living expenses to give you an indication of the cost variations. Fees are for the academic year 1998/99. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of colleges/universities in the US and you should always confirm costs with the universities.

Total Tuition & Living Costs Under \$18,000

STATE	UNIVERSITY	Tuition	Living Costs	Total Costs
New Mexico	New Mexico Junior College	1030	6605	7635
Oklahoma	Connors State College	3144	4604	7748
Oklahoma	Southeastern Oklahoma State University	4229	5211	9440
Nebraska	Bellevue University	3850	5900	9750
North Dakota	Dickinson State University	5256	5688	10944
California	Golden Gate University	8472	3520	11992
North Dakota	University of North Dakota	6774	6043	12817
Mississippi	University of Mississippi	6155	6672	12827
New Mexico	New Mexico Highlands University	7081	5859	12940
Louisiana	Louisiana State University A & M College	7402	6488	13890
Alabama	University of Alabama	7216	7177	14393
Michigan	Eastern Michigan University	8420	6420	14840
North Carolina	University of North Carolina - Asheville	8310	6611	14921
Arizona	Northern Arizona University	8076	7116	15192
South Carolina	University of South Carolina - Aiken	7734	7690	15424
New York	SUNY at Purchase	8924	7823	16747
Hawaii	University of Hawaii - Manoa	9526	7304	16830
Minnesota	University of Minnesota - Morris	9464	7572	17036
Arizona	Arizona State University	9110	8025	17135
Michigan	Michigan Technological University	10203	6985	17188
Colorado	University of Northern Colorado	9682	7508	17190
South Dakota	University of Sioux Falls	11100	6150	17250
Washington, DC	Corcoran School of Art	13440	3904	17344

Arkansas	Lyon College	10380	7056	17436
Texas	University of Houston - Houston	8277	9250	17527
Missouri	Central Methodist College	10620	7280	17900

Total Tuition & Living Costs Between \$18,000 and \$25,000

STATE	UNIVERSITY	Tuition	Living Costs	Total Costs
Hawaii	Hawaii Pacific University	7920	10250	18170
Kentucky	Kentucky Wesleyan College	9830	8710	18540
Maine	University of Maine	11631	7134	18765
Kansas	Bethel College	10840	8048	18888
Montana	Caroll College	11490	7640	19130
South Dakota	Augustana College	13640	5770	19410
California	Fresno Pacific University	12672	7062	19734
Nebraska	Dana College	12126	7740	19866
Maryland	University of Maryland - College Park	11222	9008	20230
Iowa	Central College	13388	7454	20842
Tennessee	King College	10550	10319	20869
South Carolina	Coker College	14155	7120	21275
Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island	12756	8887	21643
Texas	Southwestern University	14600	7046	21646
Idaho	Albertson College	15880	5850	21730
Pennsylvania	Duquesne University	14699	7558	22257
Minnesota	St. Olaf College	17140	5360	22500
West Virginia	West Virginia Wesleyan College	16750	6894	23644
Indiana	St. Mary's College	16274	7657	23931
Maryland	Mount St. Mary's College	16100	8050	24150
Illinois	Rockford College	15500	9065	24565
New Hampshire	New England College	17102	7562	24664
Virginia	Randolph Macon Woman's College	16710	8210	24920

Total Tuition & Living Costs Over \$25,000

STATE	UNIVERSITY	Tuition	Living Costs	Total Costs
Tennessee	University of the South	18350	6665	25015
California	Marymount College	14665	10464	25129
Georgia	Oglethorpe University	16860	8440	25300

Florida	Eckerd College	17685	7615	25300
Florida	Florida Institute of Technology	16735	8770	25505
West Virginia	Bethany College	17688	7831	25519
Iowa	Grinnell College	18446	7214	25660
Wisconsin	Beloit College	19770	6066	25836
Oregon	Lewis and Clark College	19356	7536	26892
Washington	Whitman College	20300	7000	27300
Vermont	Bennington College	26400	1100	27500
Oregon	Willamette University	21100	6640	27740
Ohio	Denison University	21060	6690	27750
Minnesota	Carleton College	22611	6059	28670
Colorado	Colorado College	20880	7870	28750
Ohio	Kenyon College	23670	5580	29250
California	California Institute of Technology	19116	10534	29650
New York	Parson's School of Design	19798	10410	30208
Florida	University of Miami	20418	10431	30849
Louisiana	Tulane University	23024	8010	31034
New York	Vassar College	23000	8230	31230
Massachusetts	Smith College	21856	9440	31296
Maine	Bowdoin College	23895	8055	31950
Massachusetts	Brandeis University	24020	8370	32390
Washington, DC	George Washington University	22625	9790	32415
California	Stanford University	22110	10334	32444
Pennsylvania	University of Pennsylvania	23254	9476	32730
Pennsylvania	Bryn Mawr College	22270	10770	33040
Illinois	University of Chicago	23514	9575	33089
Rhode Island	Brown University	24332	8838	33170
Massachusetts	Amherst College	24152	9198	33350
New Jersey	Princeton University	23820	9670	33490
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	24050	9500	33550
New York	Columbia University-Columbia College	24144	9447	33591
Massachusetts	Harvard & Radcliffe Colleges	23618	10032	33650
Connecticut	Yale University	23780	9912	33692
New Hampshire	Dartmouth College	23910	11437	35347

APPENDIX II:

A SAMPLING OF US COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITH FINANCIAL AID FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The following tables are by no means comprehensive; many more US colleges and universities offer financial aid to international students for undergraduate study. The data given is based on **averages** and is meant only to demonstrate that full funding is rare. Information given in the tables is **not** guaranteed and you should contact the universities to confirm availability of financial aid for international students.

- **% Receiving Aid**=Percentage of international students at the institution who are receiving some form of financial aid from the institution (scholarships, grants, loans, or on-campus jobs)
- **Total Costs**=US Dollar amount for 1998-1999 academic year for tuition, fees, and living costs
- **Average Award**=Average US Dollar amount per award to each international student
- **% of Costs Covered**=Percentage of tuition/living costs that the average amount of the award will cover
- **Student's Average Contribution**=The remaining amount of money the student must provide to attend the institution (Tuition/Living – Average Award)

TABLE A: Universities where the average amount of financial aid reduces the student's contribution to **below \$10,000** per year – NB check the "% of Int'l Students Receiving Aid" to determine your chances of receiving an award.

State	University	% Receiving Aid	Total Costs	Average Award	% of costs covered	Student's average contribution
California	California Institute of Technology	48	29650	29275	99	375
Indiana	St. Mary's College	31	23931	22026	92	1905
Tennessee	University of the South	63	25015	22081	88	2934
Vermont	Bennington College	97	27500	23142	84	4358
Kentucky	Kentucky Wesleyan College	21	18540	13090	71	5450
North Carolina	University of North Carolina - Asheville	36	14921	8714	58	6207
Indiana	Wabash College	97	23105	16800	73	6305

Massachusetts	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	60	33550	26254	78	7296
New York	Columbia University-Columbia College	23	33591	25957	77	7634
Pennsylvania	University of Pennsylvania	18	32730	25000	76	7730
Rhode Island	Brown University	26	33170	25194	76	7976
Colorado	Colorado College	30	28750	20595	72	8155
Alabama	University of Alabama	15	14393	6001	42	8392
Nebraska	Bellevue University	5	9750	1086	11	8664
California	Golden Gate University	20	11992	3019	25	8973
North Dakota	University of North Dakota	11	12817	3649	28	9168
Maine	Bowdoin College	51	31950	22621	71	9329
Massachusetts	Harvard & Radcliffe Colleges	69	33650	24165	72	9485
Maine	University of Maine	29	18765	9160	49	9605
Michigan	Eastern Michigan University	94	14840	5140	35	9700

TABLE B: Universities where the average amount of financial aid reduces the student's average contribution to between **\$10-15,000** per year – NB check the "% of Int'l Students Receiving Aid" to determine your chances of receiving an award.

STATE	UNIVERSITY	% Receiving Aid	Total Costs	Average Award	% of Costs Covered	Student's Average Contribution
North Dakota	Dickinson State University	8	10944	700	6	10224
Louisiana	Louisiana State University A & M College	69	13890	3392	24	10498
California	Fresno Pacific University	83	19734	9068	46	10666
New Mexico	New Mexico Highlands University	67	12940	2040	16	10900
New Hampshire	Dartmouth College	40	35347	23980	68	11367
West Virginia	Bethany College	69	25519	14000	55	11519
Alabama	Huntingdon College	39	19345	7481	39	11864
Ohio	Kenyon College	73	29250	17111	58	12139
Missouri	Central Methodist College	73	17900	5375	30	12525
Wisconsin	Beloit College	51	25836	13016	50	12820
Texas	University of Houston - Houston	28	17527	4330	25	13197
Arizona	Arizona State University	24	17135	3893	23	13242
Kentucky	Bellarmino College	43	17760	4300	24	13460
North Carolina	Mars Hill College	32	16850	3000	18	13850
Ohio	Denison University	93	27750	13655	49	14095
Pennsylvania	Bryn Mawr College	53	33040	18707	57	14333

Michigan	Michigan Technological University	9	17188	2628	15	14560
Kansas	Bethel College	78	18888	4132	22	14756
West Virginia	West Virginia Wesleyan College	58	23644	8800	37	14844

TABLE C: Universities where the average amount of financial aid reduces the student's average contribution to between **\$15-20,000** per year – NB check the "% of Int'l Students Receiving Aid" to determine your chances of receiving an award.

STATE	UNIVERSITY	% Receiving Aid	Total Costs	Average Award	% of Costs Covered	Student's Average Contribution
Michigan	Aquinas College	85	19355	4218	22	15137
Maryland	Hood College	64	25300	10095	40	15205
Washington	Walla Walla College	61	20451	5000	24	15451
Kansas	Hesston College	80	17748	2196	12	15552
Hawaii	University of Hawaii - Manoa	41	16830	1200	7	15630
New York	SUNY at Purchase	35	16747	714	4	16033
California	Stanford University	39	32444	16083	50	16361
Delaware	Wesley College	29	18587	2000	11	16587
California	Marymount College	4	25129	8333	33	16796
New Hampshire	New England College	50	24664	7802	32	16862
Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island	25	21643	4600	21	17043
Louisiana	Tulane University	17	31034	13774	44	17260
Pennsylvania	Duquesne University	17	22257	4778	21	17479
Tennessee	King College	37	20869	3200	15	17669
Maryland	University of Maryland - College Park	24	20230	2364	12	17866
Minnesota	Carleton College	63	28670	10701	37	17969
Oregon	Lewis and Clark College	44	26892	8886	33	18006
Florida	Eckerd College	76	25300	6456	26	18844
Missouri	Webster University	20	20692	1000	5	19692
Florida	Florida Institute of Technology	25	25505	5555	22	19950

TABLE D: Universities where the average amount of financial aid reduces the student's average contribution to between **\$20-30,000** per year – NB check the "% of Int'l Students Receiving Aid" to determine your chances of receiving an award.

STATE	UNIVERSITY	% Receiving Aid	Total Costs	Average Award	% of Costs Covered	Student's Average Contribution
Illinois	Illinois Institute of Technology	83	24350	3850	16	20500
New Jersey	Monmouth University	43	24450	3824	16	20626
Washington, DC	George Washington University	9	32415	11710	36	20705
Illinois	Rockford College	100	24565	3836	16	20729
Idaho	Albertson College	37	21730	455	2	21275
Florida	University of Miami	13	30849	8221	27	22628
New York	Parson's School of Design	24	30208	5253	17	24955

TABLE E: A comprehensive listing of universities that offer financial aid for foreign students:

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
California Inst. Of Technology	CA	\$29,650	84	400	\$29,275
Connecticut College	CT	\$30,575	128	15	\$27,936
University of Chicago	IL	\$33,089	194	18	\$27,319
Bates College	ME	\$31,910	31	17	\$27,216
Wesleyan University	CT	\$32,090	116	69	\$26,925
Mass. Inst. Of Technology	MA	\$33,550	334	201	\$26,254
Mount Holyoke College	MA	\$31,662	104	103	\$26,099
Columbia U.-Columbia College	NY	\$33,591	146	33	\$25,957
Colgate University	NY	\$31,555	66		\$25,943
Pomona College	CA	\$32,470	39	16	\$25,664
Wellesley College	MA	\$32,270	120	30	\$25,523
Brown University	RI	\$33,170	390	101	\$25,194
University of Pennsylvania	PA	\$32,730	847	150	\$25,000
Columbia International Univ,	SC	\$13,210	13	7	\$25,000
Dickinson College	PA	\$31,150	85	21	\$24,895
Columbia U.-Sch of Eng.	NY	\$33,421	138	19	\$24,663
Swathmore College	PA	\$32,430	75		\$24,220
Harvard/Radcliffe Colleges	MA	\$33,650	450	311	\$24,165
Dartmouth College	NH	\$35,347	326	132	\$23,980
Franklin and Marshall College	PA	\$30,114	103	77	\$23,627
Yale University	CT	\$33,692	330	104	\$23,460
Davidson College	NC	\$29,483	48	34	\$23,441
Bennington College	VT	\$27,500	39	38	\$23,142
Amherst College	MA	\$33,350	64	39	\$22,859
Bowdin College	ME	\$31,950	47	24	\$22,621
University of the south	TN	\$26,015	27	17	\$22,081
Saint Mary's College	IN	\$23,879	16	5	\$22,026

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Williams College	MA	\$32,230	98	25	\$21,894
Vassar College	NY	\$31,230	71	46	\$21,746
Brandeis University	MA	\$32,390	153	90	\$21,612
Hamilton University	NY	\$30,875	61	41	\$21,172
Lafayette College	PA	\$30,915	73	46	\$20,851
Colorado College	CO	\$28,750	50	15	\$20,595
St. Lawrence University	NY	\$30,465	23	61	\$20,376
Reed College	OR	\$31,190	42	18	\$20,328
Georgetown University	DC	\$33,232	575	20	\$20,000
Goucher College	MD	\$28,780	26	4	\$19,600
Elmira College	NY	\$28,956	50	8	\$19,383
Washington and Lee Univ.	VA	\$24,200	41	21	\$19,370
Union College	NY	\$31,075	55	15	\$19,138
Susquehanna University	PA	\$25,990	14	3	\$18,880
Bryn Mawr College	PA	\$33,040	106	56	\$18,707
Marlboro College	VT	\$28,595	5	5	\$18,699
Smith College	MA	\$31,296	201	107	\$18,288
Hartwick College	NY	\$30,770	48	23	\$18,192
Gettysburg College	PA	\$29,758	42	20	\$18,000
Occidental College	CA	\$29,746	69	9	\$17,384
Elms College	MA	\$20,550	9	6	\$17,333
Delaware Valley College	PA	\$23,950	9	5	\$17,284
Assumption College	MA	\$24,075	7	3	\$17,280
Kenyon College	OH	\$29,250	30	22	\$17,111
Principia College	IL	\$22,987	70	52	\$16,923
Wabash College	IN	\$23,105	32	31	\$16,800
Wingate University	NC	\$18,800	6	9	\$16,578
Oberlin College	OH	\$30,794	158	107	\$16,574
Colby College	ME	\$31,920	96	53	\$16,453
Haverford College	PA	\$32,359	28	7	\$16,287

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Whitman College	WA	\$27,300	30	18	\$16,208
College of St. Elizabeth	NJ	\$21,280	53	6	\$16,180
St. Olaf College	MN	\$22,500	60	63	\$16,111
Stanford University	CA	\$32,444	311	120	\$16,083
College of the Atlantic	ME	\$24,860	6	2	\$16,000
University of Bridgeport	CT	\$22,844	447	252	\$15,560
Macalester College	MN	\$27,314	193	168	\$15,411
Moravian College	PA	\$25,550	17	10	\$15,261
St. Francis College	PA	\$24,832	8	8	\$15,194
Earlham College	IN	\$25,112	44	30	\$15,193
St. Leo College	FL	\$19,080	28	8	\$15,094
Ceder Crest College	PA	\$23,925	19	7	\$15,088
U. of California: Los Angeles	CA	\$22,835	655	20	\$14,841
Agnes Scott College	GA	\$25,225	32	23	\$14,750
Bucknell University	PA	\$29,800	62	13	\$14,700
Randolph-Macon Women's	VA	\$24,920	59	26	\$14,590
Simmons College	MA	\$28,732	58	6	\$14,500
Ohio Wesleyan University	OH	\$27,460	192	197	\$14,492
Grinnell College	IO	\$25,660	100	90	\$14,008
Bethany College	WV	\$25,519	72	50	\$14,000
Randolph-Macon College	VA	\$22,695	8	1	\$14,000
Lake Forest College	IL	\$25,720	84	61	\$13,865
Tulane University	LA	\$31,034	329	55	\$13,774
Denison University	OH	\$27,750	91	85	\$13,655
College of Wooster	OH	\$27,200	123	115	\$13,175
Kentucky Wesleyan College	KY	\$18,540	14	3	\$13,090
U. of Colorado-Boulder	CO	\$32,810	432	40	\$13,075
Beloit College	WI	\$25,836	134	68	\$13,016
Austin College	TX	\$21,398	26	18	\$12,910
Gordon College	MA	\$22,810	24	22	\$12,870

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
St. Michael's College	VT	\$24,800	55	5	\$12,800
Taylor University	IN	\$21,000	45	40	\$12,702
Erskine College	SC	\$21,521	5	3	\$12,667
Hollins University	VA	\$23,445	28	16	\$12,545
Concordia College	MI	\$19,254	12	2	\$12,479
Western Maryland College	MD	\$24,550	73	65	\$12,394
Alvernia College	PA	\$19,030	2	3	\$12,333
Spalding University	KY	\$14,186	56	35	\$12,332
Bethany Lutheran College	MN	\$19,985	5	3	\$12,222
Hobart & William Smith	NY	\$31,793	33	30	\$12,106
Thomas Aquinas College	CA	\$21,333	33	29	\$12,006
Henry Cogswell College	WA	\$18,052	2	1	\$12,000
Mills College	CA	\$26,756	10	2	\$11,950
Allegheny College	PA	\$26,500	28	16	\$11,919
Ithaca College	NY	\$27,048	105	74	\$11,859
Lynn University	FL	\$26,650	258	77	\$11,795
Wisconsin Lutheran College	WI	\$18,630	13	11	\$11,743
George Washington Univ.	DC	\$32,415	771	68	\$11,710
Lycoming College	PA	\$23,370	15	12	\$11,677
University of Richmond	VA	\$25,138	97	4	\$11,575
Lawrence University	WI	\$26,793	83	90	\$41,561
Clark University	MA	\$27,340	339	184	\$11,464
St Bonaventure University	NY	\$22,750	37	17	\$11,341
Maine College of Art	ME	\$25,540	7	4	\$11,270
Mount Aloysius College	PA	\$16,410	28	2	\$11,270
Alfred University	NY	\$28,870	2	2	\$11,250
Sweet Briar College	VA	\$24,475	29	5	\$11,000
College Misericordia	PA	\$22,180	1	6	\$10,935
Centenary College	NJ	\$21,436	57	11	\$10,935
Roanoke College	VA	\$25,235	25	18	\$10,901

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Carleton College	MN	\$28,670	24	15	\$10,701
Augustana College	IL	\$23,065	19	15	\$10,566
Juniata College	PA	\$23,905	65	23	\$10,444
Rhodes College	TN	\$25,892	17	15	\$10,267
Northland College	WI	\$20,775	15	12	\$10,136
Knox College	IL	\$25,675	102	64	\$10,133
Michigan State University	MI	\$18,786	977	43	\$10,130
Rockhurst College	MO	\$22,125	15	10	\$10,123
Jarvis Christian College	TX	\$12,479	4	5	\$10,120
Luther College	10	\$23,000	150	130	\$10,102
Hood College	MD	\$25,300	25	16	\$10,095
Simon'sRock College of Bard	MA	\$30,650	4	3	\$10,000
Scripps College	CA	\$29,625	34	3	\$1 0.000
Reformed Bible College	MI	\$12,503	41	15	\$10,000
Wittenberg University	OH	\$27,664	110	55	\$9,894
Augsburg College	MN	\$21,475	96	72	\$9,830
Willamette University	OR	\$27,740	135	30	\$9,745
Ashland University	OH	\$20,276	56	18	\$9,722
Hannibal-LaGrangeCollege	MO	\$12,901	11	8	\$9,702
Centenary Coll.of Louisiana	LA	\$19,250	11	5	\$9,549
McMurry University	TX	\$16,004	18	5	\$9,546
St. Joseph's College	IN	\$20,100	8	4	\$9,544
Regis College	MA	\$24,550	43	9	\$9,526
Barry University	FL	\$23,480	305	164	\$9,491
University of Sioux Falls	SD	\$17,250	19	4	\$9,490
Alma College	MI	\$21,615	11	4	\$9,470
Illinois Wesleyan University	IL	\$24,350	40	11	\$9,402
Maharishi U. of Management	10	\$23,330	167	80	\$9,300
William Jewell College	MO	\$19,340	22	15	\$9,230
Oglethorpe University	GA	\$25,300	50	19	\$9,218

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
College of the Ozarks	MO	\$5,050	35	34	\$9,200
Cornell University	NY	\$32,133	878	95	\$9,166
University of Maine-Orono	ME	\$18,765	175	£0	\$9,160
Greensboro College	NC	\$20,545	13	10	\$9,155
Gardner-Webb University	NC	\$16,920	13	35	\$9,069
Fresno Pacific University	CA	\$19,734	29	24	\$9,068
University of Charleston	WV	\$19,058	58	19	\$9,041
Muhlenberg College	PA	\$28,192	13	6	\$9,000
Mount St. Mary's College	MD	\$24,150	30	12	\$9,000
Marywood University	PA	\$21,835	48	15	\$9,000
Montserrat College of Art	MA	\$19,372	15	3	\$8,995
University of Saint Thomas	MN	\$22,383	53	32	\$8,976
Southwestern University	TX	\$21,646	12	13	\$8,969
Ripon College	WI	\$25,140	22	9	\$8,942
Franklin College	IN	\$19,010	9	7	\$8,939
Cleveland Institute of Music	OH	\$25,230	43	31	\$8,905
Hendrix College	AR	\$16,803	9	C	\$8,901
Lewis & Clark College	OR	\$26,892	99	44	\$8,886
Mount Senarlo College	WI	\$16,630	22	S	\$8,860
Philadelphia College of Bible	PA	\$16,343	57	12	\$8,850
Shippensburg U of PA	PA	\$15,996	46	2£	\$8,824
W. Virginia Wesleyan College	WV	\$23,644	72	42	\$8,800
Otterbein College	OH	\$22,122	68	4	\$8,750
Simpson College	IO	\$20,915	7	2	\$8,748
U of N. Carolina-Asheville	NC	\$14,921	42	15	\$8,714
Wells College	NY	\$24,640	4	3	\$8,700
Elizabethtown College	PA	\$23,950	36	33	\$8,648
Lyon College	AR	\$17,436	24	21	\$8,632

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Manhatton School of Music	NY	\$30,380	126	50	\$8,598
University of Evansville	IN	\$21,600	116	43	\$8,467
N.C. State University	NC	\$18,370	228	35	\$8,463
Oakland University	MI	\$17,102	329	23	\$8,435
Warren Wilson University	NC	\$19,300	24	20	\$8,418
Montreat College	NC	\$18,392	9	8	\$8,416
Edinboro University of PA	PA	\$15,822	62	29	\$8,393
Marymount College	CA	\$25,129	150	6	\$8,333
Salem College	NC	\$23,710	21	18	\$8,333
Bridgewater College	VA	\$21,880	16	11	\$8,320
Anderson University	IN	\$19,370	22	18	\$8,290
Wartburg College	IO	\$20,630	66	46	\$8,289
St. John's University	NY	\$28,435	295	79	\$8,283
East Stroudsburg Univ.of PA	PA	\$15,392	33	28	\$8,264
Northwest College	WA	\$16,882	15	4	\$8,250
DePauw University	IN	\$25,225	33	17	\$8,234
University of Miami	FL	\$30,849	770	103	\$8,221
U. of Minnesota:Morris	MN	\$17,036	25	11	\$8,139
New York University	NY	\$32,450	933	13	\$8,115
Midland Lutheran College	NE	\$21,375	43	10	\$8,110
Lebanon Valley College	PA	\$23,280	39	30	\$8,011
Julliard School	NY	\$25,400	118	91	\$7,950
Albion College	MI	\$24,256	13	7	\$7,879
San Francisco Cons.of Music	CA	\$27,420	22	16	\$7,853
University of Rochester	NY	\$31,204	244	136	\$7,846
New England College	NH	\$24,664	42	21	\$7,802
Westmont College	CA	\$27,254	8	6	\$7,731
Green Mountain College	VT	\$21,805	30	20	\$7,709
Belmont Abbey College	NC	\$20,788	23	14	\$7,619
Millikin University	IL	\$22,644	12	5	\$7,595

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Mansfield U of PA	PA	\$15,976	22	15	\$7,580
California University of PA	PA	\$16,538	47	23	\$7~565
Plymouth State College	NH	\$16,761	17	9	\$7,564
Beaver College	PA	\$25,020	39	6	\$7,517
Bluffton College	OH	\$18,696	23	20	\$7,501
Huntingdon College	AL	\$19,345	23	9	\$7,481
Limestone College	SC	\$15,800	7	5	\$7,449
Centre College	KY	\$23,400	11	3	\$7,367
Sierra Nevada College	NV	\$20,450	26	12	\$7,345
Texas Christian University	TX	\$18,740	190	122	\$7,313
Brenau University	GA	\$19,865	23	13	\$7,303
Asbury College	KY	\$17,610	25	19	\$7,212
University of Maine-Fort Kent	ME	\$15,024	0	5	\$7,200
Art Institute of Seattle	WA	\$15,441	225	3	\$7,197
University of Denver	CO	\$27,083	337	3	\$7,182
Johns Hopkins	MD	\$30,985	45	19	\$7,067
Central College	IO	\$20,842	25	18	\$7,055
Slippery Rock U, of PA	PA	\$15,127	185	134	\$7,023
Siena College	NY	\$20,945	9	1	\$7,000
Millersville U of PA	PA	\$16,143	73	40	\$6,960
Harding University	AR	\$14,249	234	163	\$6,946
Elmhurst College	IL	\$19,670	21	7	\$6,928
St. John Fisher College	NY	\$20,565	5	5	\$6,885
George Fox University	OR	\$23,300	52	13	\$6,769
Tennessee Wesleyan College	TN	\$13,690	28	6	\$6,763
Davis and Elkins College	WV	\$17,280	0	16	\$6,750
Huntington College	IN	\$21,420	14	8	\$6,734
Judson College	AL	\$13,990	5	5	\$6,722
University of Vermont	VT	\$27,376	88	15	\$6,667
University of New Hampshire	NH	\$21,811	226	12	\$6,667

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Concordia College Moorhead	MN	\$17,580	81	52	\$6,655
Western Oregon University	OR	\$17,475	105	20	\$6,632
Alaska Pacific University	AK	\$13,796	15	4	\$6,609
Lynchburg College	VA	\$22,185	33	11	\$6,604
Paler College of Art	CT	\$14,935	6	6	\$6,593
Worcester Polytechnic Inst.	MA	\$28,970	164	15	\$6,566
Albright College	PA	\$26,352	65	3	\$6,563
Calvin College	MI	\$19,195	317	62	\$6,540
Florida Southern College	FL	\$19,374	77	66	\$6,526
Gustavus Adolphus College	MN	\$22,640	0	42	\$6,524
Milligan College	TN	\$17,550	13	10	\$6,524
Old Dominion University	VA	\$18,606	253	16	\$6,500
Tusculum College	TN	\$17,350	15	15	\$6,493
Bay Path College	MA	\$20,854	43	17	\$6,471
Eckerd College	FL	\$25,300	186	141	\$6,456
Manchester College	IN	\$20,050	42	40	\$6,378
Houghton College	NY	\$19,630	80	74	\$6,348
Warner Southern College	FL	\$15,643	7	5	\$6,300
Wadhams Hall Seminary	NY	\$11,715	3	5	\$6,284
Ursinus College	PA	\$25,150	26	20	\$6,250
Bethel College	IN	\$17,650	34	36	\$6,229
Guilford College	NC	\$22,516	40	13	\$6,200
Liberty University	VA	\$16,050	240	192	\$6,155
Belmont University	TN	\$19,040	83	11	\$6,095
Medaille College	NY	\$18,340	38	28	\$6,029
Eastern Mennonite University	VA	\$18,550	49	29	\$6,028
U. of Alabama	AL	\$14,393	435	66	\$6,001
College of St. Francis	IL	\$19,090	5	2	\$6,000
Western Montana College	MT	\$14,962	5	3	\$6,000
Young Harris College	GA	\$13,545	6	6	\$6,000

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
Mary Baldwin College	VA	\$23,615	40	9	\$5,996
Lourdes College	OH	\$17,090	1	3	\$5,925
Marymount University	VA	\$21,270	222	19	\$5,894
Eastern College	PA	\$22,454	34	13	\$5,882
Abilene Christian University	TX	\$16,620	187	90	\$5,869
Clarkson University	NY	\$28,250	101	27	\$5,863
Fordham University	NY	\$28,515	100	16	\$5,861
College of St. Benedict	MN	\$21,723	54	20	\$5,850
Dana College	NE	\$19,866	22	23	\$5,825
Shorter College	GA	\$17,340	30	27	\$5,759
North Park University	IL	\$25,435	112	70	\$5,714
Concordia College	NY	\$22,240	66	18	\$5,678
St. Francis College	NY	\$10,085	127	63	\$5,669
Johnson Bible College	TN	\$10,570	11	9	\$5,664
Hanover College	IN	\$17,250	22	17	\$5,650
Coker College	SC	\$21,275	10	4	\$5,625
Marist College	NY	\$23,792	44	8	\$5,600
Florida Institute of Tech.	FL	\$25,505	512	129	\$5,555
U of Northern Iowa	IA	\$14,341	166	13	\$5,512
School of Visual Arts	NY	\$25,025	513	30	\$5,500
Marymount Manhattan Col	NY	\$20,960	34	18	\$5,500
Naropa Institute	CO	\$16,696	13	11	\$5,455
Trinity Christian College	IL	\$20,105	17	9	\$5,452
Thiel College	PA	\$21,390	40	10	\$5,423
Central Methodist College	MO	\$17,900	15	11	\$5,375
Bluefield College	VA	\$14,060		5	\$5,339
University of Puget Sound	WA	\$27,665	29		\$5,333
Methodist College	NC	\$20,410	35	15	\$5,333
Radford University	VA	\$14,786	94	35	\$5,306
Chatham College	PA	\$23,964	18	13	\$5,300

College Name	State	Annual Cost	#Inter'l Students	# Aided	Average Award
College of St. Catherine	MN	\$23,074	58	42	\$5,280
Carroll College	WI	\$20,680	54	18	\$5,278
University of Mississippi	MS	\$12,827	169	26	\$5,269
Parsons School of Design	NY	\$30,208	581	140	\$5,253
Champlain College	VT	\$19,315	2	8	\$5,250
Seton Hill College	PA	\$20,900	12	11	\$5,244
Lehigh University	PA	\$30,590	233	4	\$5,231
Lasell College	MA	\$24,950	39	3	\$5,183
Mercyhurst College	PA	\$21,534	88	58	\$5,180
Viterbo College	WI	\$18,680	16	15	\$5,167
N.C. School of the Arts	NC	\$17,713	30	13	\$5,161
Eastern Michigan University	MI	\$14,840	457	430	\$5,140
St. John's University	MN	\$21,614	34	16	\$5,139
Nebraska Wesleyan Univ.	NE	\$18,428	22	4	\$5,107
St. Augustine's College	NC	\$14,387	132	97	\$5,088
Adrian College	MI	\$19,225	11	10	\$5,047
Long Island U: C.W. Post	NY	\$27,610	115	15	\$5,000
Cornell College	IO	\$25,435	14	4	\$5,000
Quinnipiac College	CT	\$25,030	26	4	\$5,000
Notre Dame College	NH	\$21,703	11	2	\$5,000
St. Joseph's College	ME	\$21,265	2	1	\$5,000
Walla Walla College	WA	\$20,451	66	40	\$5,000
St. Mary's University	TX	\$18,474	124	4	\$5,000
University of Mary	ND	\$13,990	18	12	\$5,000

Please refer to the following source for a complete table: “*The International Student Handbook of US College*” (2000 edition). New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

Appendix III

Application Essay Tips

Your application essay is the most important essay you will ever write and probably the most difficult. The essay must demonstrate multiple facets of your personality and is often the only tool admissions officers use to determine whether or not you have what it takes to study at a particular university.

To help you with the process, EssayEdge.com prepared a series of tips to help you brainstorm topics, select a topic, and write the essay. Unfortunately, writing an excellent application essay is not formulaic; we cannot simply give you a list of instructions and guarantee you will write an excellent essay on your first try. However, with practice and determination, you should be able to write an excellent essay. To view this document online go to: www.essayedge.com

Brainstorming Topics

The most important part of your essay is the subject matter. You should expect to devote about 1-2 weeks simply to brainstorming ideas. To begin brainstorming a subject idea consider the following points. From brainstorming, you may find a subject you had not considered at first.

- What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments? Do not limit yourself to accomplishments you have been formally recognized for since the most interesting essays often are based on accomplishments that may have been trite at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life.
- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from everyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- What was the most difficult time in your life, and why? How did your perspective on life change as a result of the difficulty?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?
- Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be? Who, of everyone living and dead, would you most like to be with? These questions should help you realize what you love most.
- Have you experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were

- opened to something you were previously blind to?
- What is your strongest, most unwavering personality trait? Do you maintain strong beliefs or adhere to a philosophy? How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about if they were writing your admissions essay for you?
- What have you done outside of the classroom that demonstrates qualities sought after by universities? Of these, which means the most to you?
- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue to contribute to them?
- What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What people, things, and accomplishments do you need? How does this particular university fit into your plans for the future?

If these questions cannot cure your writer's block, consider the following exercises:

1. Ask for Help from Parents, Friends, Colleagues, etc.

If you cannot characterize yourself and your personality traits do not automatically leap to mind, ask your friends to write a list of your five most salient personality traits. Ask your friends why they chose the ones they did. If an image of your personality begins to emerge, consider life experiences that could illustrate the particular traits.

2. Consider your Childhood

While admissions officers are not interested in reading about your childhood and are more interested in the last 2-4 years of your life, you might consider events of your childhood that inspired the interests you have today. Interests that began in childhood may be the most defining parts of your life, even if you recently lost interest. For instance, if you were interested in math since an early age and now want to study medicine, you might incorporate this into your medical school admissions essay. Analyze the reasons for your interests and how they were shaped from your upbringing.

3. Consider your Role Models

Many applicants do not have role models and were never greatly influenced by just one or two people. However, for those of you who have role models and actually aspire to become like certain people, you may want to incorporate a discussion of that person and the traits you admired into your application essay.

4. Read Sample Admissions Essays

Before you sat down to write a poem, you would certainly read past poets. Before writing a book of philosophy, you would consider past philosophers. In the same way, we recommend reading sample admissions essays to understand what topics other applicants chose. EssayEdge.com maintains an archive of over 100 free sample admissions essays.

5. Goal Determination

Life is short. Why do you want spend 2-6 years of your life at a particular college, graduate school, or professional school? How is the degree necessary to the fulfillment of your goals? When considering goals, think broadly. Few people would be satisfied with just a career. How else will your education fit your needs and lead you to a fulfilling life?

If after reading this entire page you do not have an idea for your essay, do not be surprised. Coming up with an idea is difficult and requires time. Actually consider the questions and exercises above. Without a topic you feel passionate about, without one that brings out the defining aspects of you personality, you risk falling into the trap of sounding like the 90 percent of applicants who will write boring admissions essays. The only way to write a unique essay is to have experiences that support whatever topic you come up with. Whatever you do, don't let the essay stress you out. Have fun with the brainstorming process. You might discover something about yourself you never consciously realized.

Selecting an Essay Topic

Having completed step one, you should now have a rough idea of the elements you wish to include in your essay, including your goals, important life experiences, research experience, diversifying features, spectacular nonacademic accomplishments, etc. You should also now have an idea of what impression you want to make on the admissions officers. We should remark that at this stage, undergraduate applicants have a large advantage over graduate school applicants. Whereas nobody questions a high school student's motivation to attend college, graduate and professional school applicants must directly address in their essays their desire to study their selected field.

You must now confront the underlying problem of the admissions essay. You must now consider topics that will allow you to synthesize your important personal characteristics and experiences into a coherent whole while simultaneously addressing your desire to attend a specific institution. While most admissions essays allow great latitude in topic selection, you must also be sure to answer the questions that were asked of you. Leaving a lasting impression on someone who reads 50-100 essays a day will not be easy, but we have compiled some guidelines to help you get started. With any luck, one or two topics, with small changes, will allow you to answer application questions for 5-7 different colleges, although admissions officers do appreciate essays that provide convincing evidence of how an applicant will fit into a particular academic environment. You should at least have read the college's webpage, admissions catalog, and have an understanding of the institution's strengths.

Consider the following questions before proceeding:

- Have you selected a topic that describes something of personal importance in your life, with which you can use **vivid personal experiences** as supporting details?
- Is your topic a gimmick? That is, do you plan to write your essay in iambic pentameter or make it funny. You should be very, very careful if you are planning to do this. We recommend strongly that you do not do this. Almost always, this is done poorly and is not appreciated by the

admissions committee. Nothing is worse than not laughing or not being amused at something that was written to be funny or amusing.

- Will your topic only repeat information listed elsewhere on your application? If so, pick a new topic. Don't mention GPAs or standardized test scores in your essay.
- Can you offer vivid supporting paragraphs to your essay topic? If you cannot easily think of supporting paragraphs with concrete examples, you should probably choose a different essay topic.
- Can you fully answer the question asked of you? Can you address and elaborate on all points within the specified word limit, or will you end up writing a poor summary of something that might be interesting as a report or research paper? If you plan on writing something technical for college admissions, make sure you truly can back up your interest in a topic and are not merely throwing around big scientific words. Unless you convince the reader that you actually have the life experiences to back up your interest in neurobiology, the reader will assume you are trying to impress him/her with shallow tactics. Also, be sure you can write to admissions officers and that you are not writing over their heads.
- Can you keep the reader's interest from the first word. The entire essay must be interesting, considering admissions officers will probably only spend a few minutes reading each essay.
- Is your topic overdone? To ascertain this, peruse through old essays. EssayEdge's 100 free essays can help you do this. However, most topics are overdone, and this is not a bad thing. A unique or convincing answer to a classic topic can pay off big.
- Will your topic turnoff a large number of people? If you write on how everyone should worship your God, how wrong or right abortion is, or how you think the Republican or Democratic Party is evil, you will not get into the college of your choice. The only thing worse than not writing a memorable essay is writing an essay that will be remembered negatively. Stay away from specific religions, political doctrines, or controversial opinions. You can still write an essay about Nietzsche's influence on your life, but express understanding that not all intelligent people will agree with Nietzsche's claims. Emphasize instead Nietzsche's influence on **your** life, and not why you think he was wrong or right in his claims.
- In this vein, if you are presenting a topic that is controversial, you must acknowledge counter arguments without sounding arrogant.
- Will an admissions officer remember your topic after a day of reading hundreds of essays? What will the officer remember about your topic? What will the officer remember about you? What will your lasting impression be?

After evaluating your essay topics with the above criteria and asking for the opinions of your teachers or colleagues, and of your friends, you should have at least 1-2 interesting essay topics. Consider the following guidelines below.

1. If you are planning on writing an essay on how you survived poverty in Russia, your mother's suicide, your father's kidnapping, or your immigration to America from Asia, you should be careful that your main goal is to address your own personal qualities. Just because something sad or horrible has happened to you does not mean that you will be a good college or graduate school student. You don't want to be remembered as the pathetic applicant. You want to be remembered as the applicant who showed impressive qualities under difficult circumstances. It is for this reason that essays relating to this topic are considered among the best. Unless you only use the horrible experience as a lens with which to magnify your own personal characteristics, you will not write a good essay. Graduate and professional school applicants should generally steer clear of this topic altogether unless you can argue that your experience will make you a better businessman, doctor, lawyer, or scholar.

2. Essays should fit in well with the rest of a candidate's application, explaining the unexplained and steering clear of that which is already obvious. For example, if you have a 4.0 GPA and a 1500 SAT, no one doubts your ability to do the academic work and addressing this topic would be ridiculous. However, if you have an 850 SAT and a 3.9 GPA or a 1450 SAT and a 2.5 GPA, you would be wise to incorporate in your essay an explanation for the apparent contradiction. For example, perhaps you were hospitalized or family concerns prevented your dedication to academics; you would want to mention this in your essay. However, do not make your essay one giant excuse. Simply give a quick, convincing explanation within the framework of your larger essay.

3. "Diversity" is the biggest buzzword of the 1990's. Every college, professional school, or graduate school wants to increase diversity. For this reason, so many applicants are tempted to declare what makes them diverse. However, simply saying you are a black, lesbian female will not impress admissions officers in the least. While an essay incorporating this information would probably be your best topic idea, you must finesse the issue by addressing your own personal qualities and how you overcame stigma, dealt with social ostracism, etc. If you are a rich student from Beverly Hills whose father is an engineer and whose mother is a lawyer, but you happen to be a minority, an essay about how you dealt with adversity would be unwise. You must demonstrate vividly your personal qualities, interests, motivations, etc. Address specifically how your diversity will contribute to the realm of campus opinion, the academic environment, and social life.

4. Don't mention weaknesses unless you absolutely need to explain them away. You want to make a positive first impression, and telling an admissions officer anything about drinking, drugs, partying, etc. undermines your goal. EssayEdge editors have read more essays on ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) than we would ever have imagined. Why admit to weakness when you can instead showcase your strengths?

5. Be honest, but not for honesty's sake. Unless you are a truly excellent writer, your best, most passionate writing will be about events that actually occurred. While you might be tempted to invent hardship, it is completely unnecessary. Write an essay about your life that demonstrates your personality.

Writing the Essay

You may be surprised that we do not address actually writing the essay until step three. From that, you should understand the extreme importance of selecting a proper subject matter. However, even seemingly boring topics can be made into exceptional admissions essays with an innovative approach. In writing the essay you must bear in mind your two goals: to persuade the admissions officer that you are extremely worthy of admission and to make the admissions officer aware that you are more than a GPA and a standardized score, that you are a real-life, intriguing personality.

Unfortunately, there is no surefire step-by-step method to writing a good essay. However, we have compiled the following list of tips that you should find useful while writing your admissions essay.

1. **Answer the Question.** You can follow the next 12 steps, but if you miss the question, you will not be admitted to any institution.
2. **Be Original.** Even seemingly boring essay topics can sound interesting if creatively approached. If writing about a gymnastics competition you trained for, do not start your essay: "I worked long hours for many weeks to train for XXX competition." Consider an opening like, "Every morning I awoke at 5:00 to sweat, tears, and blood as I trained on the uneven bars hoping to bring the state gymnastics trophy to my hometown."
3. **Be Yourself.** Admissions officers want to learn about you and your writing ability. Write about something meaningful and describe your feelings, not necessarily your actions. If you do this, your essay will be unique. Many people travel to foreign countries or win competitions, but your feelings during these events are unique to you. Unless a philosophy or societal problem has interested you intensely for years, stay away from grand themes that you have little personal experience with.
4. **Don't "Thesaurize" your Composition.** For some reason, students continue to think big words make good essays. Big words are fine, but only if they are used in the appropriate contexts with complex styles. Think Hemingway.
5. **Use Imagery and Clear, Vivid Prose.** If you are not adept with imagery, you can write an excellent essay without it, but it's not easy. The application essay lends itself to imagery since the entire essay requires your experiences as supporting details. Appeal to the five senses of the admissions officers.
6. **Spend the Most Time on your Introduction.** Expect admissions officers to spend 1-2 minutes reading your essay. You must use your introduction to grab their interest from the beginning. You might even consider completely changing your introduction after writing your body paragraphs.

- **Don't Summarize in your Introduction.** Ask yourself why a reader would want to read your entire essay after reading your introduction. If you summarize, the admissions officer need not read the rest of your essay.
 - **Create Mystery or Intrigue in your Introduction.** It is not necessary or recommended that your first sentence give away the subject matter. Raise questions in the minds of the admissions officers to force them to read on. Appeal to their emotions to make them relate to your subject matter.
7. **Body Paragraphs Must Relate to Introduction.** Your introduction can be original, but cannot be silly. The paragraphs that follow must relate to your introduction.
 8. **Use Transition.** Applicants continue to ignore transition to their own detriment. You must use transition within paragraphs and especially between paragraphs to preserve the logical flow of your essay. Transition is not limited to phrases like "as a result, in addition, while . . . , since . . . , etc." but includes repeating key words and progressing the idea. Transition provides the intellectual architecture to argument building.
 9. **Conclusions are Crucial.** The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader or impress upon them your qualifications. In the conclusion, avoid summary since the essay is rather short to begin with; the reader should not need to be reminded of what you wrote 300 words before. Also do not use stock phrases like "in conclusion, in summary, to conclude, etc." You should consider the following conclusions:
 - Expand upon the broader implications of your discussion.
 - Consider linking your conclusion to your introduction to establish a sense of balance by reiterating introductory phrases.
 - Redefine a term used previously in your body paragraphs.
 - End with a famous quote that is relevant to your argument. Do not **try** to do this, as this approach is overdone. This should come naturally.
 - Frame your discussion within a larger context or show that your topic has widespread appeal.
 - Remember, your essay need not be so tidy that you can answer why your little sister died or why people starve in Africa; you are not writing a "sit-com," but should forge some attempt at closure.
 10. **Do Something Else.** Spend a week or so away from your draft to decide if you still consider your topic and approach worthwhile.

11. **Give your Draft to Others.** ASK editors to read with these questions in mind:

- What is the essay about?
- Have I used active voice verbs wherever possible?
- Is my sentence structure varied or do I use all long or all short sentences?
- Do you detect any cliches?
- Do I use transition appropriately?
- Do I use imagery often and does this make the essay clearer and more vivid?
- What's the best part of the essay?
- What about the essay is memorable?
- What's the worst part of the essay?
- What parts of the essay need elaboration or are unclear?
- What parts of the essay do not support your main argument or are immaterial to your case?
- Is every single sentence crucial to the essay? This **MUST** be the case.
- What does the essay reveal about your personality?
- Could anyone else have written this essay?
- How would you fill in the following blank based on the essay: "I want to accept you to this college because our college needs more _____."

12. **Revise, Revise, Revise.** You only are allowed so many words; use them wisely. If H.D. Thoreau couldn't write a good essay without revision, neither will you. Delete anything in the essay that does not relate to your main argument. Do you use transition? Are your introduction and conclusions more than summaries? Did you find every single grammatical error?

- Allow for the evolution of your main topic. Do not assume your subject must remain fixed and that you can only tweak sentences.
- Editing takes time. Consider reordering your supporting details, delete irrelevant sections, and make clear the broader implications of your experiences. Allow your more important arguments to come to the foreground. Take points that might only be implicit and make them explicit.

Example of a successful essay:

“Sometimes, I think the world around me is crumbling to the ground, but it never does. Like most people, I face the crunches of deadlines and endless demands on my time, but I have never encountered the type of adversity that can crush people, that can drive people crazy, that can drive them to suicide. In this respect, I am lucky. In love with Scripture and the Bible verses I memorized in youth, I find support when I seek it. With a very large family network, I can rely on my loved ones for advice and support, but I realized firsthand that many people lack this help; they never experience the bonds between family members and the touch of God through Scripture.

Frequently, I volunteer at a low-income pre-school in our community. The children who attend are deprived of the most basic things in life, the things I take for granted. Hungry for love and knowledge, these children love to be hugged and talked to, and they very much look forward to my weekly visits. Moreover, they have helped me to understand my obligation to help those less fortunate and to realize how truly blessed I am. When I leave for college, I will miss these children who have taught me unforgettable lessons about love and integrity. I am amazed each time I go there at the power they have over me. I am amazed at how sometimes it takes the innocence of a child to open doors that have been locked for years.

While I never had to deal with their pain and can never know their heartache and longing, I look to them as examples of why I should continue to work hard and to not waste opportunities. However, I need not look outside my family for this inspiration, for my cousin is a symbol of strength in adversity. I need look no farther than Ann Elizabeth when I feel like my world is falling apart and that I have too many commitments and too little time. Through Ann Elizabeth, I see the strength of the Lord and see the courage that I hope I will one day possess. Ann Elizabeth has shaped my life through her example and has made me into someone you would want to participate in your university’s community. Hers is the story of wrong choices, of a life wasted, and of recovery, courage, and change. I am proud to call her my cousin.

Ann lives through pain and heartbreak, but she will live to see triumph because she has what it takes, but she needs all this courage just to stay alive. Born a rich girl, she grew up to be beautiful, destined to live in a house with a white picket fence. A Gainesville socialite and a southern belle, she visited country clubs and gardens at tea time, but she was never happy. She knew nothing of need, nothing of heartache, nothing of life. But she learned and continues to learn more about pain than anyone should ever know. Ann is a beautiful 22 year-old girl with a long slender figure and eyes full of pain. She has a mother, father, and 16 year-old brother sitting at home. They pray for her each night; they pray that she survives another day caged in her Peruvian prison cell.

At age 17, months from her 18th birthday, Ann Elizabeth ran away from home, rocking my family’s structured world. No one knew where she was, but no one thought she could make it. What did this rich girl know about surviving? Finally, my uncle found her. She had moved to Miami and became involved with the wrong crowd. She married a Cuban named Lester who spoke no English, forcing her to learn Spanish, a skill that would save her life. Poor, she looked for employment, and in December, she was offered a job. For the cursed sum of \$7,000 dollars, she threw her entire life away; she

destroyed herself for nothing. A naïve, stupid girl, she ended her chances at happiness with one decision, and after that, her goal became not to be happy, but to survive a life of hell.

In December of 1995, when most young, newlyweds are putting up Christmas trees, she was smuggling cocaine for her Lester. On her way to the plane back to the US she was stopped and found with 18 pounds of deadly white powder in her suitcase. The 20 year-old princess was caught on her first run; she was no drug dealer; she was just stupid. Even after being caught she didn't know she was in trouble. All she knew was that she had to get home. She had to get back to Miami, but she never made it home.

At the time of her arrest, Ann Elizabeth was almost dead. An 88-pound heroine addict, we thought she was going to die; in fact, we thought she was dead already. In a way, getting caught saved her life, but it saved her for hell. Ironically, the place she had always run away from was now the place she needed to be most, but she just couldn't get home. Caught, tried, and sentenced, she started life over in a wretched Peruvian jail.

The steel bars that surround Ann Elizabeth are not fit for animals, let alone human beings. Peruvian prisons are not known for their humanity. In a prison built for 250 prisoners, she lives with 900 other women. The all-female prison is completely self-run, and the women must prepare their own meals, clean, and care for themselves and others. When Ann Elizabeth writes letters and her Peruvian guards accept them, she writes of the "adventures" she has had. She describes chickens that run inside the jail, soiling on the same places where the women must sleep. The water is so contaminated that the prisoners must boil it before drinking. Instead of dining on steak, she now dines on rice. With malnutrition plaguing the prison, many of the women have lost their hair and teeth. For \$7,000, she ruined her life.

Over the two years and four months she has been imprisoned, my uncle, her father, has visited her only seven times. Through his efforts, the U.S. embassy has attempted to alleviate some of the nutrition problems. Providing the Americans just enough vitamins and minerals to stay alive, my cousin watches as those around her rot and die before her very eyes.

When Ann Elizabeth was first imprisoned, she had the all-too-familiar attitude that it was just another thing that wasn't her fault. She believed herself the victim, but she allowed herself to be victimized. After being in Lima a year, she realized that all her problems had been caused from within. She's finally come to realize that there is indeed a higher force. A force higher than herself, the force of God. After extensively reading and studying her Bible, she now spends her time teaching the women how to read God's Word. She relies on her now God-given hope and courage to get through these difficult times. After going through such tremendous physical pain and mental anguish, she had lost all hope. She had hit rock bottom; death seemed like her only way out. Forced to start her life all over again she began to think of her future. God has given her the strength to make some responsible decisions for the first time. She has grown up. It has taken every ounce of courage in her, but she has made it.

We have all been down a very long road. There have been so many twists and turns along the way, but finally we have found our precious "E" again. It won't be an easy

road, it never is, but we will make it. Love heals all wounds, even ones that rip people to shreds, or so we hope. Ann Elizabeth let us into her heart for the very first time, and that took the greatest amount of courage of all.

Through Ann Elizabeth, I have come to realize that people make their own choices in life, and eventually we are held accountable for those choices. Through my love for her

and knowledge of what she has had to go through, I make different decisions than other people my age. I value life; and with every choice I make I think of Ann Elizabeth, my family, the children, and most of all my Lord. With their support and guidance, I will prevail. Hopefully, so will she.

College Packing List: The Stuff To Take

Getting ready to go away to college? What should you pack? There are dozens of things you might not think about until you're at school and discover you miss them. We've assembled this handy checklist to help you make sure you're comfortable in your new environment. If you're going to have a roommate, coordinate the bigger items (phone, TV, VCR, stereo) with him or her...you won't need two of them, and there probably wouldn't be room anyway.

Clothing:	♦ Athletic shoes or sneakers (a lot of walking coming up!)
♦ Bathing suit	♦ Baseball cap (the ultimate cure for the inevitable bad hair day--and we all have 'em.)
♦ Bathrobe for making your way down the hall to the bathroom	♦ Boots (snowboots!)
♦ Coat (heavy for cold climates)	♦ Dressy shoes to go with your outfit (you don't want to wear a suit or dress with sneakers!)
♦ Favorite T-shirts	♦ Gloves or mittens
♦ Hat (for cold weather)	♦ In-line skates
♦ Jackets - light for cool weather, heavy for cold	♦ Jeans
♦ Jewelry (though we don't recommend taking anything valuable)	♦ Lint brush or tape roller
♦ Long underwear	♦ Pajamas
♦ Pantyhose and/or tights (for women) (and clear nail polish to stop runs!)	♦ Raincoat
♦ Rubber flip flops for shower	♦ Sandals
♦ Scarf (for cold weather)	♦ Shorts
♦ Small sewing kit (come on, you have to sew on the occasional button!)	♦ Socks and underwear (bring a lot!!)
♦ Slippers or scuffs	♦ Sunglasses
♦ Sweatclothes	♦ Watch
Decoration:	♦ Area Carpet for your room
♦ Blankets or comforters	♦ Coasters (to prevent wet rings and waterspots from cold drinks!)
♦ Cork bulletin board	♦ Famous quotes - If you're having a tough time in college use a quote to help you through it. Quotes are universal; there is a quote for every situation.

♦ Fish tank	♦ Hammer and nails, tacks, or self-stick adhesive
♦ Holiday decorations of choice	♦ "Husband"--a backrest that looks like the top of a chair
♦ Houseplant or two (if you've got a green thumb!)	♦ Mattress pad
♦ Pictures of family and friends	♦ Posters and pictures for your walls
♦ Push pins or thumbtacks for your bulletin board	♦ Room deodorizer
♦ Screwdriver	♦ Small bookcase (if you'll have room)
♦ Stuffed bear or other favorite stuffed animal	♦ Tape (masking tape, scotch tape, or double-sided--or poster tack!)
Wipeaway message board and dry erase markers	
Dishes and Food:	
♦ Aluminum foil	♦ Blender
♦ Can opener	♦ Coffee cup or mug
♦ Coffee maker and coffee packets (or single serving coffee bags)	♦ Cutting Board
♦ Dishes: a few plates, silverware, cups and glasses, storage containers	♦ Dishwashing liquid
♦ Favorite soft drink or bottled water	♦ Hot-air popcorn popper
♦ Hotplate (check with your dorm to make sure they're allowed)	♦ Ice cube trays
♦ Microwave (if they're allowed)	♦ Paper plates (so convenient if you don't like to wash dishes!)
♦ Paper towels, napkins, dishcloths	♦ Self-sealing plastic bags
♦ Small refrigerator if the school doesn't supply them	♦ Stockpile of candy, gum, other favorite treats
♦ Toaster (check to make sure your school allows them!)	♦ Water filter (portable)
Electronics:	♦ Alarm clock
♦ Answering machine	♦ Batteries
♦ Camera	♦ Extension cords
♦ Fan (especially if your dorm isn't air conditioned!!)	♦ Film
♦ Flashlight	♦ Headphones (great if you and your roommate don't like the same tunes)
♦ Lamp (a small clip-on one is good!)	♦ Personal book light or night visor (so your roomie

	can sleep when you're up late)
♦ Personal stereo and favorite CDs or tapes. (Just don't take them all!)	♦ Surge protector or power strip
♦ Telephone	
Finance	
♦ ATM card (try to limit your withdrawals!)	♦ Cash (though not too much!)
♦ Checkbook	♦ Prepaid calling card
♦ Quarters for doing laundry (lots of quarters!)	♦ Driver's License (or other form of gov't ID)
Organization and Storage	♦ Address book with addresses of friends at home and other schools
♦ Air mattress and pump	♦ Backpack (or a bookbag, which can usually hold more)
♦ Baking soda (great for deodorizing)	♦ Basket for shower items
♦ Bicycle and bicycle lock	♦ Calendar
♦ Catalogs for holiday shopping (especially if you're not taking a car!)	♦ Cleaning supplies--glass cleaner, sponge, dishwashing liquid, etc
♦ Clothes pins--useful for everything from keeping the chips closed to hanging things to dry	♦ Closet organizer
♦ Coat hangers	♦ Desk organizer
♦ Door stop (important if your dorm room door closes automatically, as many do)	♦ Drying rack for clothes you don't want to put in the dryer
♦ Duct tape	♦ Filing cabinet - if you don't have one use a plastic crate
♦ Foot locker or storage box	♦ Garbage bags
♦ Glue and/or superglue	♦ Glue gun (great for fixing everything from drooping hems to broken items!)
♦ Hooks (over the door hooks add great additional storage for clothing)	♦ Laundry bag or basket
♦ Light bulbs	♦ Padlock or combination lock for the gym or library
♦ Plastic crates to store your stuff--dorms are notoriously low on closet, drawer, and shelf space!	♦ Plug-in outlet adapters and extenders
♦ Self-sealing bags--great for storage, soaking laundry, etc.	♦ Shoe organizer

♦ Small wash tub or basin	♦ Stationery and stamps (lots of stamps!)
♦ Swiss army knife	♦ Tape - the five kinds:
♦ Duct	♦ Electrical
♦ Masking	♦ Medical
♦ Scotch	♦ Tape measure
♦ Travel guide of your new city or town	♦ Wastebasket (many schools only allow a metal one)
♦ Wetwipes for quick cleanups	
♦ Personal Care:	
♦ Aspirin or other pain reliever	♦ Bible or religious work of choice
♦ Brush and comb	♦ Bug spray
♦ Cards or board games--they make great icebreakers!	♦ Chapstick (Lip Ice) (just wait until that wind hits your lips in January)
♦ Contact lens care products (and extra lenses if you wear disposables)	♦ Cotton balls
♦ Cotton swabs	♦ Deodorant
♦ Drying rack for laundry (handwashables)	♦ Egg crate foam mattress (dorm mattresses are often uncomfortable)
♦ Extra eyeglasses or contacts	♦ Eyedrops
♦ Feminine care products	♦ First aid kit (small; at least take band-aids and disinfectant)
♦ Fragrance	♦ Hair dryer
♦ Health insurance card	♦ Iron
♦ Ironing board (miniature)	♦ Journal or diary
♦ Laundry detergent and stain stick	♦ Lotion (hand or body to combat dry skin!)
♦ Makeup mirror (guys can use them for shaving)	♦ Mirror to hang on the wall for those last minute hair/make-up checks
♦ Nail clippers and file	♦ Nail polish remover
♦ Pepper Spray	♦ Pillow (or lots of pillows for your bed)
♦ Photo album of friends and family	♦ Prescription medications and refills
♦ Q-Tips (Ear buds)	♦ Razor, shaving cream, deodorant, and other toiletries
♦ Safety pins	♦ Shampoo and conditioner

♦ Sheets and pillowcases	♦ Static Guard
♦ Sunscreen	♦ Soap or shower gel
♦ Tissues	♦ Toilet paper
♦ Toothbrush and toothpaste	♦ Towels and washcloths (don't forget a beach towel)
♦ Tweezers	♦ Umbrella
♦ Vitamins	♦ Wall mirror (if your dorm doesn't have them)
♦ Zit cream (really important before a big date!)	
♦	♦
Study Aids:	♦
♦ Book of common quotations (reference)	♦ Calculator
♦ Calendar	♦ Computer (laptops are great if you can swing it)
♦ Computer diskettes	♦ Computer paper
♦ Crayons (more useful than you might think!)	♦ Dictionary (bring a good one, or get one at school)
♦ Earplugs (in case your dorm is noisy or your roommate snores)	♦ Folders
♦ Highlighter pen(s)	♦ Hole punch
♦ Lap desk	♦ Light bulbs
♦ Markers	♦ Miniature cassette recorder
♦ Notebooks (but you may want to buy ones with your school's logo once you get there!)	♦ Note cards
♦ Organizer or daily planner	♦ Paper Clips
♦ Pens	♦ Pencils and erasers
♦ Pencil sharpener	♦ Post-It Notes
♦ Printer (for computer) and printer paper	♦ Rubber bands
♦ Ruler	♦ Scissors
♦ Stapler, staples, and staple remover	♦ Thesaurus
♦ White-Out (Tip-ex)(for cleaning up those messy errors)	♦ Writer's guide or grammar book

Remember that the electrical voltage in the United States is different than that of South Africa. Unless you are prepared with the correct adapters your South African appliances will not work.